

SR 7 Route Development Plan (Phase 1)

Stakeholder Committee

Meeting Summary

Meeting Date: April 28, 2005

Location: Bob Lyle Community Center, Morton WA

Attendees: *Stakeholder Committee*

Albert Mcaughan – Mineral Citizen
Jim Gerwig – Morton City Hall
Joan Reed-Nickerson – Mt. Rainier Scenic Railroad
Danna Hadley – Forest Service
David Knies – Washington State Patrol
Craig Robbins – WSDOT Morton Maintenance
Steve Bell – Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife
Christie Greiter – Chamber of Commerce
Gerri Bartlett – Sterling Savings Bank
Fred Eckenberg – Cowlitz Tribe
Mark Cook – Lewis County
Dennis Hadaller – Lewis County Commission
Douglas Hayden – Lewis Mountain Highway Transit
Dean Lokken – Morton Citizen/Cowlitz River Historical Society
Rosemary Siipola – Southwest Washington Regional Transp. Planning Organization
April Doolittle – Centralia College
Dr. Tom Anderson – Morton General Hospital
Fred Schwindt – Bicycle interests
Dave Garcia – Hampton Lumber Mill

Staff

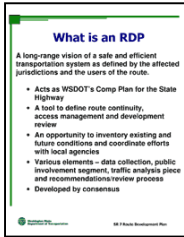
Karyn Anderson, WSDOT Southwest Region
Lynn Hakes, WSDOT Olympic Region
John Donahue, WSDOT Olympic Region
Vicki Steigner, WSDOT Olympic Region
Seth Gallant, WSDOT Southwest Region
Yvette Liufau, WSDOT Olympic Region

**Welcome and
Introductions**

Karyn Anderson, Southwest Region Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), welcomed everyone to the first Stakeholder Committee meeting for the SR 7 Route Development Plan (RDP), introduced herself and Lynn Hakes, Olympic Region WSDOT. Karyn described the study limits of this RDP (milepost 0.00 at US 12 to milepost 47.0 at SR 507 /Roy Wye vicinity) and that this 47-mile stretch lies between both Southwest Region and Olympic Region, therefore, the study process will be a bi-region effort with Karyn and Lynn as project co-leaders.

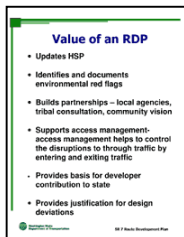
Karyn asked the group to introduce themselves and outlined the agenda for the evening.

Study Purpose And Process

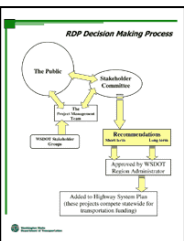


Karyn kicked off the stakeholder committee meeting by beginning the evening's presentation with, "What is an RDP?" She explained to the group that an RDP is a long-range vision of a safe and efficient transportation system that identifies transportation issues, safety and mobility improvement opportunities and ultimately guides WSDOT investment in the corridor over the next 20 years. Karyn also pointed out the following key points:

- An RDP acts as WSDOT's Comprehensive Plan for the State Highway.
- It is a tool to define route continuity, access management, and development review.
- It provides an opportunity to inventory existing and future condition and coordinate efforts with local agencies.
- There are various elements with in an RDP – A data collection segment, a public involvement segment, a traffic analysis piece and recommendations and review process.



Karyn then described to the group the value of an RDP. She explained, that once the RDP recommendations exist they could be included in WSDOT's long-range Highway Systems Plan (HSP) to become eligible to compete for funding. An RDP supports access management and provides justification for design deviations. Through this study process, it identifies environmental "red flags", especially those identified by the community, and includes them as part of the overall study report.



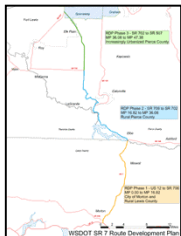
Next, Lynn Hakes presented the route development plan process, how stakeholders fit into that process and that it is consensus driven. Lynn recapped the efforts made to contact the committee members and reminded them that they represent many different transportation interests on SR 7 and in the community. She mentioned that project staff will be relying on the stakeholder committee to tell us about the route and that the committee's diversity regarding transportation issues and interests provides us with important information that helps to conduct this study.

Lynn, described that we also have internal stakeholders; WSDOT maintenance, traffic, and design staff. She pointed out that while WSDOT has guidelines to follow, an RDP could provide justification for a design deviation. The team can check with our internal stakeholders if those types of ideas arise during this process.

Event	Date
Stakeholder Meeting #1 (Kickoff)	April
Review process/define questions	
Public Meeting #1	May
Public issue identification	
Stakeholder Meeting #2	May
Review draft of plan	
Stakeholder Meeting #3	June
Review issues/identify solutions	
Public Meeting #2	July
Stakeholder Meeting #4	September
Recommendations/development	
Public Meeting #3	September
Recommendations/Community/Review	
Stakeholder Meeting #5	October
Final Recommendations/Process Review	

Also, during the course of the study, public meetings will be conducted to share the progress of the stakeholder committee, and ask for input about route issues for the stakeholder committee's consideration. Once the information gathered about the route is compiled, what the community feels could be improved, and how those improvements might be implemented, the stakeholder committee will endorse a course of action for improving the route over the next 20 years. This is the Route Development Plan. It will include a list of short term and long-term improvement opportunities. The short-term projects will be forwarded to WSDOT management for consideration and the long-term projects will be included in the HSP, where they will become eligible to compete for funding on a statewide basis.

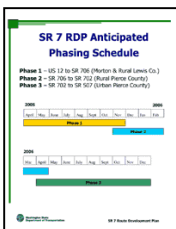
Safety, Traffic Data, Context Sensitive Solutions



Yvette Liufau, Olympic Region WSDOT presented the team's strategy and approach for this RDP. She explained the team is studying the route from milepost 0.00 at US 12 to milepost 47.0 at SR 507 /Roy Wye vicinity, and that the team also decided to separate the RDP into 3 manageable segments or phases. The phases for this study are as follows:

- Phase 1 will cover from US 12 to SR 706,
- Phase 2 will cover from SR 706 to SR 702 and,
- Phase 3 will cover from SR 702 to SR 507.

Phase 1 of the study should take approximately 6 months to complete.



Seth Gallant, Southwest Region WSDOT, presented the traffic analysis conducted to date. He pointed out that the intersections of US 12, SR 508, Mineral Rd. S. and Mineral Rd. N. with SR 7 have been studied, and that current traffic counts were used for the analysis. Using historic growth rates, he used a conservative growth number of 1% (1.5% at SR 7 and US 12) annual growth to adjust traffic counts to year 2030. He explained to the group that the team forecasts to the year 2030, to be consistent with other twenty-year plans, and to make sure what we build now will work in the future. Seth explained that while the initial analysis revealed no volumes during the summer months.



Seth explained to the group, that improving safety is also an important driving factor of traffic analysis work. Accident data was analyzed and safety projects were identified. Accident history and existing safety improvement projects already identified within the HSP were discussed, mentioning that some of the areas of concern in Morton may be good sites for Context Sensitive Solutions.



Lynn defined Context Sensitive Solutions as "how a highway fits into your community". WSDOT takes into account a community's aesthetic and environmental values. We work with the community to try to make sure that the highway fits into their plans and that our construction schedules are compatible with community events. The outcome of the process should ensure that the highway is safe for the user and the community.



Lynn added that applying context sensitive designs doesn't mean that the department always has extra money for things beyond our standard design. But sometimes the department can incorporate the local agency's wishes into their plans or extend project limits to coordinate with local agencies.

Likes and Dislikes

The group participated in a “likes and dislikes” workshop. The purpose of the exercise was to get the stakeholder committee to help build a more realistic picture of the route.

LIKES

- SR 7 connects communities
- SR 7 is Gateway to Mt. Rainier
- SR 7 is a better year round alternative to Skate Creek
- There is rich history In Morton and Mineral
- The views and history of the area
- Rural character
- SR 7 is a relaxing alternative to I-5
- SR 7 provides access to timber and sawmills
- When I-5 floods, SR 7 becomes a connecting route
- Historic train depot located along SR 7
- SR 7 is an enjoyable drive, relaxing and fun
- SR 7 provides access to recreational opportunities

DISLIKES

- SR 7 has no passing lanes
- SR 7 has limited pull-outs
- Geometrics of SR 7 – curvy road
- Narrow shoulders
- Ungated railroad crossing
- No cell phone reception
- There are steep, deep ditches in places along SR 7
- The bridge over the Nisqually River near Elbe appears narrow and in poor condition.
- Bridges on SR 7 restrict roadway width – no shoulders
- SR 7 has no left-turn lanes in Morton
- No left turn lanes at SR 7 and SR 508
- No left turn lane near Sterling Bank (approx. MP 0.2)
- Steep grades
- Snow and ice
- Lack of guardrails
- Crosswalk areas at Adams and SR 7, Westland and SR 7 and existing access control.
- Sight distance is poor at Murray Road
- Sight distance is poor at SR 7 and SR 508
- SR 7 has no shoulders
- The pavement on SR 7 is in poor condition
- Drainage improvements are needed
- Tree canopy keeps light from road and delays ice and snow from melting
- SR 7 has no crosswalk at Adams Street

- SR 7 is too wide at Westlake – not crossing friendly and is a school walking route
- Dip in SR 7 just past the school bus garage near Fairhart Way
- Near MP 5.5-MP 6 –Settlement in road vertically deflects vehicles
- Poor sight distance at Fairhart Way
- Culverts on SR 7 create fish passage barriers
- Wetland functions have been degraded due to road at approximately MP 13 north
- Roads help spread exotic plants detrimental to native environment
- Salmon bearing stream north of Morton (approximately MP1) has been channelized.
- Hydraulics changing the stream bed beneath bridges
- Larger culverts are needed for wildlife crossings
- Culverts not wide enough to have shorelines deter small mammals from using them to safely cross the road.
- Wildlife (deer) frequently killed on SR 7 near Tubafor
- Elk in the vicinity of Pleasant Valley sometimes are on SR 7
- Fewer WSP patrols on SR 7 as opposed to US 12 and SR 508
- Considerable ROW where WSDOT does not own timber. Clearing must be coordinated with timber companies.
- Expect 60% increase in truck traffic by the year 2030
- SR 7 cuts the community of Morton in half

Vision Statement

John Donahue, Olympic Region WSDOT, facilitated the Visioning Exercise. The goal of the exercise is to produce a Vision Statement and provide the committee an opportunity to share their ideas, opinions and diverse interests. A vision statement should be:



- The end result- not the process
- Be specific
- Use present tense
- Desire/not obligation
- Enthusiastic
- Positive / not negative
- Not limited by expectations
- Doesn't describe projects

Each of the four groups developed a vision statement. At the end of the exercise all vision statements were read aloud. Staff will condense the draft statements into a single statement for the stakeholder committee to revise and endorse at the next meeting.

Next Meeting Date

Karyn wrapped up the evening, thanking everyone for coming and providing valuable input. The next Stakeholder Committee meeting was set for May 26, 2005 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.